



Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

ISSUE 27

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SHEMINI

29th Nissan 5775

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 9, verses 1 - 16

- ✚ The Kohanim were inaugurated on the eighth day of the Mishkan's dedication ceremony.
- ✚ To mark the event, Aaron brings two korbonos (sacrifices) with him. One Korban Hatat (Sin offering) and one Korban Olah (burnt offering).

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 9, verses 17 -23

Bnai Yisrael also bring korbonos for Aaron to offer up to Hashem on their behalf. This consisted of One Korban Hatat, Two Korban Olah's, Two Korban Shlamim (Peace offerings) and a Minha (meal offering).

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 9, verse 24 - Chapter 10, verse 11

- ✚ Once all of the korbonos have been offered up, Aaron raises both of his hands towards the people and blesses them.
- ✚ Hashem's Shekinah (presence) appears, sending down a fire from Shamayim (heaven) consuming the korbonos that belongs to him. Bnai Yisrael then begin singing and bowing down in jubilation.

R'VI' - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 10, verses 12 - 15

- ✚ Two of Aaron's sons Nadav and Avihu, decide to make their own contribution to the inauguration. They each take a pan and burns incense in them, which is totally forbidden.
- ✚ For their disobedience, a second fire streams down from Shamayim and strikes them both dead.
- ✚ Moshe tells a dumbstruck Aaron and his two other sons, Elazar and Itamar not to show any grief or mourn for their kin as they have been anointed with consecrated oil.
- ✚ Hashem institutes a law of any Kohen who enters the Mishkan must refrain from drinking any wine or other alcohol beverages because they must be able to differentiate between the sacred and pure Korbonos with the profane and impure.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 10, verses 16 - 20

- ✚ Moshe witnesses Aaron's two other sons, Elazar and Itamar burning the Korban Hatat (Sin offering) instead of consuming it.
- ✚ When Moshe confronts them, Aaron intercedes and argues with Moshe, that Hashem would not expect them or himself to eat from the day's sacrifices because of their brothers / his other son's tragic deaths
- ✚ Moshe listens to what Aaron has to say and agrees with him.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 11, verses 1 - 32

- ✚ Hashem teaches Moshe and Aaron the laws relating to Kashrus. (Kosher Food).
- ✚ An animal that has both cloven (split) hooves and chews its cud is deemed kosher; whereas an animal like a camel, rabbit etc. which only chew the cud or a pig that does not but has cloven hooves are considered non-kosher.
- ✚ Every type seafood is prohibited apart from fish that has both fins and scales.
- ✚ Apart from the twenty birds listed in the Torah, all the other species are accepted as being kosher to eat.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 11, verses 33 - 47

- ✚ If a carcass of a non-kosher animal has been in contact with either a person, their clothing or utensils, they will be classified as becoming tamei (impure) and must be immersed in a Mikvah to become tahor (pure) once more. However if the vessel is made from earthen ware it can never become pure again and must be broken in order that it won't get used in error.
- ✚ All insects are deemed not kosher to eat. Hashem warns Bnai Yisrael that anyone who does consume them will not only become tamei but will repulse their Neshama (soul) too.
- ✚ Hashem tells Bnai Yisrael, the reason why he led them out of Mitzraim (Egypt) was that he wanted them to become holy just like himself.

Haftorah – 1st book of Shmuel (Samuel), Chapter 20 verses 1 to Chapter 18 = 42

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ Yonasan (Jonathan) is the son of King Shaul (Saul) and heir to the throne. David is a hero of Israel so powerful that Shaul sees him as a threat to his kingship and attempts to assassinate him.
- ✚ David manages to escape and Yonasan rendezvouses with him to make a plan in order to keep David safe.

LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- ✚ The Haftorah is a segment from the book of Shmuel which is read whenever Shabbat falls the day before a new moon (Rosh Chodesh). Its relationship to the new moon is clear, for the text begins with the words: "And Yonasan said to him: Tomorrow is the new moon"

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

The old adage "You are what you eat" first appeared in French and German literature around the 1800s. But the original place where you find this idea that people and food are intimately connected is in this week's Parsha of Shemini where the Torah lays out the framework for the innovative "You are what you eat" manifesto, known to us as 'Kashrus'

Throughout our history, the rationale behind kashrus, although seriously debated has remained a mystery. Even our greatest ever Torah Commentators, and Rabbis, who sought to find reasons; medical, spiritual, biological or otherwise to ascertain why these limitations of what we can and not eat were given failed to find a logical reason behind them. However they all seem to agree that these laws, just like all the other Mitzvot we have to adhere to is part of what I like to call 'Spiritual Discipline, which helps us refine ourselves into better people and connects us to our Neshama's (Souls).

What I find fascinating also and just as perplexing in this week's sedra, is as well as listing all the foods which can become impure (in a spiritual sense); the Torah describes how vessels although made for the same function but constructed from different materials (a metallic one and a ceramic one.) which comes into contact with something being classed as impure, would produce diametrically opposite results. The metallic vessel becomes impure while the ceramic vessel remains pure. Why?

One explanation I found written by The Kotzker Rebbe (Rabbi Menachem Mendel Morgenstern) explains it is because of the nature of the utensils themselves and how we view them. Metal utensils are considered items of value and as such, when they come into contact with impurity they contract it and pass it on to the food inside. Whereas earthenware vessels, on the other hand, are only valued for the protection they provide to their contents. Hence the outside of a ceramic utensil is merely a shell for its essence (what it holds inside), therefore it cannot become impure by external contact. However, if an impure item falls inside an earthenware vessel, then not only does the food become impure, it also transfers that impurity to the vessel as well. In the same case, however, a metal vessel would not necessarily transfer its impurity to the entire vessel.

We are all in a sense, like an earthenware receptacle. Our bodies are only as valuable as what we contain. On one level, we truly are "What we eat," and the laws of kashrut help keep us spiritually healthy. On a deeper level, we contain far more than just food; our actions also define us. When we actively seek to fill ourselves with proper nourishment, we make our bodies into worthwhile vessels. With the right "fuel," we can begin the task of performing worthwhile deeds that give the vessel, our bodies its true value.

The effect of eating Kosher not only maintains our Jewish identity as a distinct, unique race but if we scrutinize everything we may do or say in the same fashion that we are meticulous and careful of what food goes into our bodies; we will not only secure our Jewish survival but will become a more healthy person both in the Physical sense and Spiritually.

